3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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husband and wife, the man is more his wife's physical and spiritual protector than her lord and master. Baŋ of Zubiuŋ-Yakɔra and Nindɔyat of Zubiuŋ-Kpayarayayar had a complicated dispute over an ancient cattle debt. It culminated in blows when Nindɔyat tried to lay hands on Baŋ's wife. That, declared Baŋ, he would not stand for.

A man is responsible for ensuring the beneficence of the ancestor spirits and other mystical powers towards his wife; and that he does this out of a sense of moral duty is evident when his wife gets ill. I well remember two particularly pathetic cases. Baripɛta, a handsome, industrious, intelligent, and popular young man, had one young wife. Shortly after the birth of their child, she was stricken with leprosy. The Tallensi are generally prepared to admit that this disease is incurable by their magico-medical methods. They say that it is contagious to the sufferer's young children. The bodily corruption of the disease disgusts them, and they say that lepers are difficult to live with as they become bitter and vindictive. Baripɛta knew all this as well as anybody else. His wife had become an economic and social burden instead of a helpmate. Yet he continued to cherish her, and, poor though he was, to try treatment after treatment for her, at the cost of many fowls and goats and pence. It is true that a jural principle was involved. As she had contracted the disease in his home under his care, he was responsible for her. He could not return her to her father, for instance. But it was plain from his behaviour and talk that he continued to care for her, with even greater consideration than usual, not out of submission to a customary jural rule but out of a feeling of immediate duty towards and concern for her.

It was the same with Ɔmara. His senior wife fell a victim to leprosy when her eldest children had already reached adulthood. He went to great expense in trying to get her cured. Explaining this to me, he said that, firstly, a sick person's nearest relatives never give up hope of a cure, and secondly, he was her husband, therefore he must try his utmost to save her. If he gave up she would be mortally hurt and might pine away. It was his duty to her and to her children.

The Sexual Relationship as the Corner-stone of Marriage

The moral bond of husband and wife is founded on their sexual relationship, conceived as the means to the end of reproduction. It is this that makes the sexual relationship the corner-stone of marriage.

The simplest proof of the significance of the sexual relationship is the fact that a marriage is not properly consummated until coitus takes place between the partners. This is seen most clearly when a widow remarries. She may be given in marriage to one of her deceased husband's brothers by the head of his effective minimal lineage, or she may be claimed by her deceased husband's brother, and may acquiesce, to begin with. If she has sexual relations with her new husband she becomes his wife, whether or not the formalities of remarriage are completed. If she

4: Fortes and Fortes E-5 (1934-1936) 1936
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the time. From a series of menus which we collected over a period of two months (November–January), it would appear that ocro is the favourite soup, while *bet* (*hibiscus sabdariffa*) is the least liked. *Neri*-seed[1] soup is rarely cooked for ordinary consumption, but is prepared on a special occasion such as a visit of an in-law relation.

Though the number of different vegetables planted is few, the women are able to achieve a considerable range of variation by using every part of the plant and by combining them in different ways. Every woman has a well-stocked larder of dried vegetable-leaves and fruits which she keeps in pots (e.g. ocro) or onion-shaped receptacles made of dried guinea-corn leaves (*kiŋkarog*) and suspended from the rafters to keep them dry (e.g. *bet* or *naŋgena*).

The process of preparation is the same in the main for most soups, and is described in the Appendix. Vegetables and other ingredients are never washed or cleaned before use: Tale women are very casual in their cooking hygiene; the cooking-pots are left unwashed from one meal till the next and the soup dishes always have stale food adhering to them.[2]

Meat is a very important ingredient in the soup. It is most commonly consumed in this way, though it is sometimes eaten by itself by men after sacrifices. It is a great delicacy and men will often spend long hours at a ceremony in order to obtain a morsel of meat or a tiny piece of the viscera. Any scrap of meat or fat which falls to the ground is picked up and swallowed raw. But meat is not 'food', they say, as porridge is, it is *valeg*, i.e. gluttony. While a little of it is strengthening, too much causes diarrhoea.

The only meat directly killed for cooking is the guinea-fowl. The

[1] *Neri* (*cucumis melo*) when ripe is buried and covered with guinea-corn stalks and allowed to rot. The seeds are then extracted, dried, and stored for making soups.

[2] The chief reason would seem to be the scarcity of water at certain times of the year, and the labour involved in carrying it, as well as the ingrained indifference of the Tallensi to cleanliness. Yet they take great pleasure in polishing their calabashes at the water-holes to make them yellow and shiny, and treat the new calabashes in a special way to attain the gloss. We have seen women carrying gravel home with them when visiting a neighbouring settlement some 4 miles away because their own clayey soil was not satisfactory for cleaning calabashes. We could not obtain an adequate explanation of this attitude from the women themselves, beyond that 'they like it so'.